



# YELLOWSTONE COUNTY SUGGESTED DRYLAND PASTURE SEEDING

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## Spring Pasture

- Forage Mixture
  1. Crested Wheatgrass – 5 lbs. Pure Live Seed (PLS)/acre–Hycrest or CD-II cultivar
  2. Alfalfa – ½ - 1 lb PLS/acre – Ladak 65 or other “good” dryland variety from SARC variety trial
  3. Dahurian Wildrye – 1 lb PLS/acre

## Summer Pasture

- Forage Mixture (native)
  1. Western Wheatgrass – 6 lbs PLS/acre – Rosana cultivar
  2. Slender White Prairie Clover or Small Burnet – 1-2 lbs PLS/acre
  3. Dahurian Wildrye – 1 lb PLS/acre

**Note:** Optional addition of Goldar Bluebunch Wheatgrass – 2 lbs PLS/acre

## Fall Pasture

- Forage Mixture

**If fenced and managed separately from surrounding rangeland:**

  1. Bozoisky-Select Russian Wildrye – 6 lbs PLS/acre
  2. Alfalfa – ½ - 1 lb PLS/acre – Ladak 65 or other “good” dryland variety from SARC variety trial
  3. Dahurian Wildrye – 1 lb PLS/acre

**If not fenced and managed separately from surrounding rangeland, use the same forage mixture as the spring pasture recommendation.**

## Projected Production

- Once fully established, each of the above mixtures can be expected to have a carrying capacity of approximately 1 AUM/acre.

## Species Description

- **Crested Wheatgrass** – Bunchgrass; easy to establish; adapted for early use; cures poorly; good grazing tolerance.
- **Dahurian Wildrye** – Short-lived (2-3 years) perennial bunchgrass; excellent germination and quick establishment.
- **Rosana Western Wheatgrass** – Sod former; cured foliage retains good nutrition. Rosana selected for seedling vigor, ease of establishment and rate of spread.
- **Antelope Slender White Prarieclover** – Perennial herbaceous legume; multiple stemmed with taproot. Antelope selected for use in prairie restoration; good seedling vigor and excellent seed production.

- **Small Burnet** – Hardy, evergreen; long-lived perennial forb; excellent foliage and seed for upland birds; good palatability for livestock and wildlife.
- **Goldar Bluebunch Wheatgrass** – Drought tolerant bunchgrass; slow to establish.
- **Bozoisky Russian Wildrye** – Bunchgrass; difficult to establish; seeding depth critical; needs wide row spacing (18 in. min.). Bozoisky is a synthetic cultivar selected for seed size and seedling vigor; easier to establish and more productive than other cultivars.

### **Site Preparation**

Dryland forages should be established on a “conventional” seedbed – ground that is firm, mellow, moist and free of weeds, debris or large clods. Rough and fluffy seedbeds can result in slow and erratic stand establishment, weed encroachment and delayed use of the pasture.

### **Timing of Seeding**

Proper seeding techniques and equipment are critical to all forage seedings, but are most critical under dryland conditions. Dryland pasture seeding should occur in the very early spring to capitalize on potential late snows and early rains. “Dormant” seeding is successful in the late fall or winter, as long as temperatures remain too low for germination until spring. Late-summer seedings should only be planted if supplemental moisture is available from stored soil moisture or irrigation. **A minimum of 2 feet of soil moisture is needed for successful plant establishment.** Seeding at other times should be avoided due to erratic precipitation.

### **Seed Placement**

Seeding technique can influence seedling establishment much more than inherent differences among species. Most forage species have small seeds that require precise, shallow placement. Forage seeds should be planted at the appropriate seeding rate into a firm seedbed and at a depth of less than one-half inch. This can best be accomplished with a drill that has depth bands, a seed agitator and packer wheels.

### **Row Spacing**

Proper seedling density leads to faster establishment, weed suppression and optimum forage production under dryland conditions. Generally, most grasses and legumes are sown in 12 to 14-inch rows, whereas Russian wildrye performs best in 18 to 24-inch rows. Alternate row seeding of grass and legume may facilitate better establishment.

### **Grazing Management**

New seedings must be protected from grazing until they are well established. Generally, grazing should be deferred at least until the first seed crop has matured. It may be necessary for the non-use period to exceed one year if seedling establishment was slow due to poor weather, weeds or other factors. Further information regarding grazing management is available at the Extension Office.

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